

Message Text

SECRET

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53

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-11 AF-06 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 OMB-01 ARAE-00 /092 W

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P 121539Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8679

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON PRIORITY

S E C R E T PORT OF SPAIN 0070

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, AO, TD, CU

SUBJECT: ANGOLA -- DISCUSSION WITH T&T PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS

REF: STATE 4271, STATE 3660

1. ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE OAU MEETING RE ANGOLA, I ARRANGED TO MEET PRIVATELY WITH TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PRIME MINISTER ERIC WILLIAMS AT HIS RESIDENCE JANUARY 9 TO BRIEF HIM ON U.S. ANGOLAN POLICY AND THE SITUATION IN AFRICA.

2. DRAWING ON REFTELS AND ITEM ONE OF CURRENT FOREIGN RELATIONS ISSUE NO. 52 I DISCUSSED ANGOLA SITUATION IN SOME DEPTH, SUPPLEMENTING INFORMATION ON MILITARY SITUATION AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT WHICH I HAD ARRANGED TO PASS TO HIM TWICE IN PREVIOUS WEEK.

3. WILLIAMS WAS MOST APPRECIATIVE AND SEEMED TROUBLED ONLY AT PROSPECT THAT OUA MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY REACHING CONSENSUS ON A DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE CONTENDING PARTIES. AT NO TIME DID WILLIAMS INDICATE ANY CONCERN AT THE U.S. ROLE TO DATE.

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4. THE PRIME MINISTER INFORMED ME THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION IN BANNING THE REFUELING IN TRINIDAD OF CUBAN MILITARY FLIGHTS TO AND FROM ANGOLA HAD BEEN ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR THINGS THE GOVERNMENT HAD DONE. HE SAID HE CONTINUED TO RECEIVE INDICATIONS OF WIDE SUPPORT FOR HIS POLICY IN THIS REGARD. HE REVEALED THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH ITS CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES HAD RENEWED ITS SPECIAL REFUELING REQUEST IN EARLY JANUARY BUT THAT THE REQUEST HAD BEEN SUMMARILY DENIED. HE FOUND IT AMUSING THAT THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT HAD STILL NOT OPENLY ASKED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS BUT CONTINUED TO TRY TO ARRANGE THE REFUELING STOPS AS A MERE TECHNICAL MATTER.
END SECRET, BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

5. ANOTHER ONE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S PROMINENT OPPOSITION PARTIES (TAPIA) HAS NOW SPOKEN OUT OFFICIALLY ON THE ANGOLA SITUATION. TAPIA ISSUED A STATEMENT JANUARY 11 WHICH EXPRESSED AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION OF NOT DECLARING SUPPORT FOR ANY ONE OF THE CONTENDING FACTIONS IN THE ANGOLAN SITUATION, AND CALLED FOR THE REMOVAL OF ALL FOREIGN TROOPS AND INTERFERENCE. THE TAPIA STATEMENT SPECIFICALLY TOOK ISSUE WITH THE DEMOCRATIC ACTION CONGRESS' (DAC) EARLIER STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR MPLA AND DENUNCIATION OF THE GOTT DECISION NOT TO REFUEL CUBAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT (SEE 75 PORT OF SPAIN 3094).
END UNCLASSIFIED, BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

6. THE TAPIA STATEMENT IS ALL THE MORE REMARKABLE IN VIEW OF THE TAPIA TENDENCY MANY TIMES TO ADOPT AUTOMATICALLY SOMEWHAT IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONS. THE STATEMENT SUPPORTS THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONTENTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY HAS WIDE SUPPORT IN THIS INSTANCE AND ALSO CLEARLY CONTRIBUTES TO TAPIA'S SHIFT TO THE MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD IN THIS ELECTION YEAR.
RICH

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